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# New Mexico: Landscapes of the Colonizing Imagination

David Spurr

"The truth is nomadic."  
Maurice Blanchot

One of the most memorable dates in the history of Swiss papers in American studies has to be April 21, 1923. On that day the patients and staff at the Heilanstalt Bellevue in Kreuzlingen, a sanatorium directed by the psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger, heard a lecture complete with photographic slides on "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America." The speaker was the renowned art historian and collector Aby Warburg, himself a patient of two years' standing, who had negotiated for his release from the sanatorium on the condition that he prove capable of delivering a sustained scholarly presentation (Steinberg 76).

Warburg was reconstructing an experience of New Mexico that dated from his visit to that region in 1895-96. Following the opening of the transcontinental Santa Fe Railroad in the previous decade, Warburg belonged to an early generation of anthropological tourists to the Southwest, attracted by the mystery of pagan religious ceremonies practiced in remote villages surrounded by a spectacular desert landscape. Although he had presented an earlier version of the lecture as "un coin de la nature vu par un Kodak" (95), Warburg now spoke as a "cultural historian" interested in the synchrony or contiguity (*Nebeneinander*) of a "primitive pagan humanity" with magical practices and a modern American culture devoted to instrumental logic and the development of technology. For Warburg, this juxtaposition serves as the occasion to compare pagan worship to the historical sources of European art, while it also exposes the spiritual poverty of a modern age with "no use for paganism," which is destroying "the space for devotion, which evolved in turn into the space required for reflection (*Denkraum*)" (54).

Rather than evaluate Warburg's contribution to anthropology, I wish to understand the Kreuzlingen lecture in the context of a larger cultural phenomenon in which the landscape of New Mexico becomes a kind of testing ground for the self-examination of the modern world. Warburg was one of a number of writers, artists, and intellectuals of the 1920s who gave New Mexico a privileged place in their work, using it as the basis for a critique of modernity as well as the focus of their own distinctly modernist preoccupations. At the same time, the rapidly expanding tourism industry was promoting a certain image of New Mexico, establishing it as an element of popular culture. The convergence of artistic, intellectual, and commercial activity made for the mythic construction of New Mexico as a landscape of the absolute, where existence acquires a spiritual clarity through the arid purification of the desert, and through contact, however brief or imaginary, with a people who have inhabited the same dwellings since before the dawn of history.

This mythic construction may justly be called a colonial fantasy for the role it has played in the migration to New Mexico by large numbers of English-speaking European Americans, whose way of life – that of modernity itself – now prevails. The recent settlement of the desert by “Anglo” Americans has been liberally inspired by the literary and touristic image of the Southwest as a “land of enchantment” where modern life can coexist peacefully with the Spanish and Indian traditions. While serene in itself, this vision can be understood properly only within the historical context of the region's dominance by European-Americans.

In the following pages I explore the sources of this mythic construction in a number of materials from the 1920s, drawing on works of ethnology, prose fiction, nonfiction prose, and photography, as well as the varied media of tourism. Apart from their shared vision of New Mexico at a particular historical moment, these materials are connected by a spatial language which relies on figures of depth, penetration, centrality and panoramic visibility. I shall argue that such a language, which belongs both to literary modernism and to the modern ethnographic imagination, has been displaced more recently by a postmodern discourse of surfaces, hybridity, and simulacra. The cultural transformation marked by this displacement corresponds, in the social realm, to a transition from colonial to postcolonial relations of power.

## I

At the heart of Warburg's vision of the Pueblo Indians stands a vertical axis – a line of ascent and descent connecting the surface of human existence with its heavenly aspirations and its chthonic origins. Warburg finds an illustration of this principle in the Pueblo use of ladders. In order to defend against enemy attacks, traditional Pueblo dwellings had openings at ground level, but were entered by ladder through an opening in the roof. Warburg, however, is interested in the more symbolic significance of steps and ladders as they embody a primal human experience of upward and downward movement in space.

The latter movement – the primal descent – is most spectacularly represented by the serpent dances at Oraibi and Walpi pueblos, where live, poisonous rattlesnakes are carried by hand in a ritual of ecstatic emotional release. Warburg links the snake dance to the classical figure of Asclepius, God of healing, who carries a snake coiled around his staff. According, then, to a pagan belief common to the Pueblos and to European classical antiquity, the snake derives its symbolic power from its uncanny ability to descend into the earth and reemerge:

The return from within the earth, from where the dead rest, along with the capacity for bodily renewal, makes the snake the most natural symbol of immortality and of rebirth from sickness and mortal anguish (42).

The figure of the serpent allows Warburg, finally, to connect pagan ritual to the vestiges of serpent worship in Western art from antiquity up to the time of the Renaissance.

Warburg's language reflects a certain tension, however, between this celebration of the space for reflection, and the valorization of a pagan ritual which derives its magical power from being rooted in an ancestral place. The pagan world, with its local deities and its centeredness in the earth, is in reality opposed to the Enlightenment tradition of reflection to which Warburg gives allegiance. Blanchot writes of the modern man inside all of us who is "eternally seduced by paganism, who desires above all to live upon the earth . . . to put down roots, to belong ontologically to the biological race and his ancestry" (269). To yield to this seduction is thus not to clear a space for reflection, but rather to turn away, evasively, into the realm of the ahistorical. While motivated by the modern intellectual's characteristic mistrust of technology, this is nonetheless a dangerous move on Warburg's part, for it takes place just as modern European revivals of paganism (in



Nazism and Fascism) are attacking Enlightenment values in the name of place, rootedness, and ancestral blood.

A photograph of Warburg taken in the Southwest expresses the incongruity of the intellectual who seeks to identify with the pagan [Fig. 1]. In a bodily *Nebeneinander* of modern and pagan man, Warburg stands next to a Hopi Indian; he sports a cowboy hat and a bandanna flung carelessly over the coat, vest, and watch-chain more properly belonging to his condition in life. In uneasy contrast to the dark, intense figure beside him, Warburg looks tentative, out of place, a little ridiculous.

The photograph may be compared to another, more famous one of a German Jewish intellectual touring the Southwest [Fig. 2]. Taken in 1931, it shows Dr. and Mrs. Albert Einstein posing with a group of Hopi Indians in ceremonial garb near the Grand Canyon. Smiling for the camera in a rumpled suit, the Nobel laureate holds a peace pipe in his right hand. The slightly incongruous effect is crowned by the fact that Einstein wears the full-feathered headdress of the Plains Indians, a parody of his own familiar snowy mane. The Plains headdress is foreign to Hopi tradition, but somehow appropriate to this supremely touristic occasion.

The photograph has been widely disseminated particularly in New Mexico, where native American life has survived in perilous contiguity with those legacies of modern physics, the Manhattan Project and the White Sands Missile Testing Range. The local fame of the photograph may derive from its symbolic value, for it brings together in apparent reconciliation two great icons of twentieth century American culture. On one hand there is the figure of Einstein himself, dazzling spirit of intellect and prophet of relativity, signifying both the infinite power of man over nature and the ultimate destabilization of time and space. Next to this archetype of radical uncertainty stand the Hopis, their drums evoking the rhythms of a traditional life, their stone dwellings standing in intimate connection to the earth, their solemn faces seeming to express ancient truths. The photograph stages a hopeful union of these two icons, joining modernity with the primitive in the simple gesture by which Einstein with his left hand grasps the hand of a Hopi child. The symbolic union of a series of oppositions – modern physics and traditional wisdom, relativity theory and ancient absolutes, scientific mastery and harmony with nature – is symptomatic of a characteristically modern desire; if one may speak figuratively of the modern world as a subject, it is the desire of the modern world to be reconciled with the object of its longing.

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Dr. and Mrs. Einstein were among thousands of tourists who came into contact with Indians of the Southwest through the auspices of an enterprise known as Indian Detours, a joint venture of the Santa Fe Railroad and the Fred Harvey Corporation (McLuhan 41). Beginning in 1926, the Indian Detours program offered guided tours of northern New Mexico to passengers traveling by rail between Chicago and California. Passengers would disembark from one of two transcontinental trains and board custom-designed "Harveycars" – elongated automobile coaches with eight-cylinder Packard engines – for a three-day tour of Indian pueblos, Spanish colonial settlements, ancient ruins, and the luxury hotels of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Vegas, New Mexico [advertising poster, Fig. 3]. They were escorted by female guides known as "couriers," college-educated young women whose khaki uniforms and broad-brimmed hats helped create the atmosphere of a scouting expedition. Besides the Einsteins, other notable "detourists" in the period before World War II included Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Guggenheim, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the Archduke Otto, pretender to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Thomas 297-302).

While the great European empires were declining from the grandeurs of the nineteenth century, the empire of American capitalism was expanding rapidly into the remote corners of the North American continent and displacing the remnants of Spanish colonization. Institutions like the Santa Fe Railroad freely deployed the rhetoric and iconography of empire in order to create a powerful and progressive corporate image. Until recently the center of this empire was the company's headquarters in Chicago's Railway Exchange Building, built in 1904 by the firm of Daniel Burnham. In its striking white terracotta exterior, the building stands as a monument to the vision of an American continent gleaming with alabaster cities, while its interior is designed to lend classical grandeur to the company's extensive field of operations. Visitors enter between sculpted female forms in the Greek style, designated respectively as figures of "Civilization" and "Progress." The allegorical style extends to an interior atrium lined with classical detail and dominated by a grand marble staircase flanked at its base by two lamps in the form of terrestrial globes, each supporting an American bald eagle of wrought iron. The iconography reflects the expanse of the Santa Fe Railroad empire, made of vast land grants from the federal government extending from mid-continent to the Pacific. In this vision of grandeur, the bald eagle of American capitalism has supplanted the imperial eagle of the Caesars and of the Holy Roman Empire.

The vision extends even to the very language of the 1926 brochure for the Indian Detours, the cover of which shows a passenger train bisecting a landscape of pueblos and mountain ranges. This brochure introduces a "vast enchanted empire . . ." of limitless panoramas and distances . . . "of lazy rivers and plunging torrents; of broad mesas and rich, peaceful valleys." In this landscape one reads the respective histories of the "American," the "Spaniard," and the "Indian,"

Yet the lives of the three flow on together, unblending. The ruse of the twentieth century disturbs little the slumberous content of the old Spanish-American towns. The Indian lives much as he did when Columbus sailed. And around them all, ringing the canyon walls and dotting the lofty mesas, lie countless mighty ruins, the unsolved riddles of the People of the Past. (Brochure 6)

Various elements of this discourse are designed to convey a sense of imperial mastery over New Mexico, a place sufficiently foreign to the rest of the United States that even today many Americans believe it to be part of the Republic of Mexico.

The commanding, panoramic view moves effortlessly over mountain, desert, and valley in a language that emphasizes both the visibility of landscape and Indian life and the ease of penetration "through the heart of all this." There is, finally, the notion that by means of modern transportation a timeless and spatially limitless landscape can be reduced to a finite moment of brief but meaningful experience.

In what one might call the spatial logic of tourism, the design of the excursion unifies a series of highly disparate scenes by rapidly connecting various points across the northern half of the state. The effect is to discourage differentiation between the various pueblos, each of which in fact has its own distinct traditions, and to subordinate everything under the category of the typical.

Apart from the historical coincidence of the Einsteins' participation in the Indian Detour, what unites their photograph with the language of the brochure is a certain tension between visual mastery and an element of mystery that is marked by, but finally escapes, the penetrating force of the touristic gaze. In the photograph this element is represented by the single window of the Hopi-style dwelling, in the background but also in the very center of the visual space. This dark opening in the earthlike construction gestures toward a secret and inaccessible inner space, in distinct contrast to the smiles and sunlit surfaces which dominate the foreground.

In the language of the brochure, the functional counterpart to this dark window consists in phrases intended to evoke mystery and concealment, especially as applied to indigenous architectural space. Ancient ruins represent "unsolved riddles," while the inhabited pueblos can be equally enigmatic. Noting the August 4th religious ceremony at Santo Domingo, the brochure informs its readers:

To this and to other strange dances in the broad plaza the white man is admitted. But at what takes place in the ceremonial kivas he can merely guess, knowing only that the weird rites there are the survival of a time remote beyond all record. (28)

I want to suggest that this language of inside and outside, of surface and depth, of visual mastery combined with calculated signs of forbidden and impenetrable space, is characteristic of the modern colonial fantasy which delights in images of an otherness that escapes its own imagining. The irony of this touristic sublime is that these signs of otherness are designated as such and manipulated by the touristic gaze; otherness is thus simultaneously registered and domesticated, creating something quite other than otherness itself. This paradox of otherness may be compared to what Jonathan Culler identifies in a related context as the dilemma of authenticity:

The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence lacks the authenticity of what is truly unspoiled, untouched by mediating cultural codes. (Culler 164)

In keeping with this approach, I wish to emphasize the importance of spatial arrangement itself as a "mediating cultural code." The spatializing of authenticity and otherness constitutes perhaps the central element of tourism as a semiotic system, while it also marks a bond between tourism and colonialism as alternate forms of the appropriation and redistribution of space according to relations of power.

The spatial construction of authenticity is a cultural phenomenon which takes place not just in photography and advertising, but in modern literature as well. In the work of D.H. Lawrence, the landscape of New Mexico becomes the site for a characteristically modernist celebration of the primitive and a source of regeneration for this weary expatriate, a "bewildered straggler out of the far-flung British Empire" (93). In his writings on New Mexico, Lawrence spatializes his representation of

landscape in three basic ways, each of which has consequences for what one might call a colonial aesthetics of space.

One of these spatializing principles is the panoramic view, some of the effects of which we have witnessed in the *Indian Detours* brochure. In an essay entitled "New Mexico" written, appropriately enough, for the magazine *Survey Graphic* in 1928, Lawrence describes the view from his ranch in the mountains above Taos:

All these mornings when I went with a hoe along the ditch of the Canon, at the ranch, and stood, in the fierce, proud silence of the Rockies, on their foothills, to look far over the desert to the blue mountains away in Arizona, blue as chalcedony, with the sage-brush desert sweeping grey-blue in between . . . the vast amphitheatre of lofty, indomitable desert, sweeping round to the ponderous Sangre de Cristo mountains on the east, and coming up flush at the pine-dotted foothills of the Rockies! What splendour! Only the tawny eagle could really sail out into the splendour of it all. (143)

The spiritual grandeur of this vision derives not just from its panoramic sweep, but also from the images Lawrence borrows from the Book of Revelation. The commanding view so characteristic of colonial discourse here allows Lawrence to assume the attitude of a prophet, proclaiming the apocalyptic collapse of modernity as "the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development" (142). In its place will rise like a phoenix "the genuine America, the America of New Mexico" (147).

Another dimension of this aesthetic emerges along an axis of surface and depth. For Lawrence, the tourist itinerary is a strictly horizontal phenomenon enacted inside a cultural bubble or, as he puts it, "the curious film which railroads, ships, motor-cars, and hotels stretch over the surface of the earth" (141). It is for visionaries such as Lawrence himself to penetrate vertically, below the surface of this film. Recalling the dances at San Geronimo mission, Taos, Lawrence writes:

Never shall I forget the deep singing of the men at the drum, swelling and sinking, the deepest sound I have heard in all my life, deeper than thunder, deeper than the sound of the Pacific Ocean, deeper than the roar of a deep waterfall: the wonderful deep sound of men calling to the unspeakable depths. (145)

The repetitive quality of this language produces an incantatory effect, a mood of "utter absorption" designed to identify the speaker himself with the



men calling to unspeakable depths. There is no reason to question that for Lawrence the ceremony was as intimate, unique, and deep as is represented here. It is worth pointing out, however, that such a response relies on the repression of the ceremony's touristic value, for in fact these same dances were so popular with tourists that they caused traffic jams as early as the 1890s (Wood 15). Lawrence seems innocent of the fact that to the Indians, he is just another tourist.

The final organizing principle of Lawrence's imaginative geography is both concentric and radial, one based on a qualitative distinction between center and periphery. "Taos pueblo still retains its old nodality," he writes, referring to the Indian belief that Taos is the heart of the world (100). But Lawrence himself can experience this nodality only from a literally eccentric position, as an outsider gazing toward the center but excluded from the inner circle. In an ambivalence characteristic of both tourism and literary modernism, Lawrence continually places himself on the edge looking in, longing for contact with the central locus of authenticity, yet somehow aware that his sense of the authentic depends on keeping his distance from it. In the essay "Indians and an Englishman" (1923), Lawrence stands outside the sacred enclosure of a *kiva*, content merely to witness an Apache religious ceremony: "It was enough to hear the sound issuing plangent from the bristling darkness of the far past, to see the bronze mask of the face lifted." He concludes with a gesture of resignation to his position on the margin: "I stand at the far edge of their firelight, and am neither denied nor accepted" (99).

The advantage of maintaining this neither/nor position lies precisely in the fact that its conscious inauthenticity is a condition for marking the authentic, a quality which has meaning only in relation to its contrary. Lawrence must remain outside the enclosure of the *kiva* – not admitted, but not absolutely excluded – in order for it to retain its magic for him. In a related context, Walter Benjamin defines the *aura* of an object as "the unique phenomenon of a distance": "If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon . . . you experience the aura of those mountains" (222-23). The aura depends, in other words, on both the viewer's leisurely circumstances and his distance from the object of contemplation – a distance which can be defined historically and culturally as well as spatially. Considering Benjamin's *aura* as another name for the authentic in nature, culture, or art, we begin to understand the significance of Lawrence's calculated distance from the central point of the Apache *kiva*. The Apaches' authenticity is not something inherent in themselves; rather it

arises out of their difference from the tourist, a difference defined spatially as distance.

Lawrence is at pains to differentiate himself from the tourist precisely because he shares the basic orientations of the touristic gaze, which relies on both visual mastery and the authenticating phenomenon of distance, be it spatial or cultural. This is not to reduce Lawrence's imaginative and richly crafted language to the level of advertising copy. It is rather to make the point that both tourism and literary modernism belong to a common culture and thus share a series of visual and rhetorical strategies through which landscape is invested with symbolic value.

Tourism differs from literary production, however, as a mass-culture phenomenon that enacts in real time and space the longings of a geographical imagination expressed with greater eloquence in works of art. In the decentered universe created by the conditions of modern capitalism, a primary object of this longing is the spiritually and spatially centered world thought to be inhabited by the Indian – the “old nodality” that Lawrence finds in Taos.

As it applies to the Tewa-speaking peoples of New Mexico, this vision of pueblo culture has acquired a certain intellectual authority through anthropological studies carried out on the structuralist model of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Alfonso Ortiz, for example, locates the sacred center of San Juan pueblo on the south plaza of that village, where ritual ceremonies must be initiated. This is the “center of centers, or the navel of navels” (21). Moving outward from this center, the Tewa world is bounded by four sacred mountains standing at the four cardinal directions in relation to the plaza. Other landmarks and shrines designate intermediate points, also sacred places, between center and periphery. In Ortiz's analysis, this radial structure on the horizontal plane intersects with a vertical topography in which the universe is divided into three cosmic levels of being: the below, the middle, and the above. Tewa myth places their ancestral origins below the earth, so that human life, like other natural forms, is understood as “emergence” from a primordial underworld (13-21).

As with Warburg, there is no question here of disputing the anthropological value of Ortiz' work, which is based both on Tewa tradition and on his own experience as a native of San Juan pueblo; in the field of anthropology *The Tewa World* is justly considered a classic in its genre. I am concerned rather with understanding the place of such a work in the symbolic economy of the dominant culture, where the ethnographic description of an ideal Tewa “world view” is wistfully read as a representation of the objective

conditions of Tewa existence; Ortiz's work, indeed, encourages such a reading by depicting everyday Tewa life as one with the elegantly ordered pattern of Tewa myth. When we consider the Tewa world in this light, it is as if the modernist imagination, with its structures of depth and nodality, had found at last the object of its longing in an actual human community, a people living in complete harmony with a divinely symmetrical universe of natural and spiritual dimensions.

"One can imagine," Foucault writes, "what prestige and importance ethnology could possess if, instead of defining itself . . . as the study of societies without history, it were deliberately to seek its object in the area of the unconscious processes that characterize the system of a given culture" (379). Like much anthropological work of the 1960s, *The Tewa World* depicts a timeless and supremely ordered universe, organized according to a coherent and unerring structural pattern, essentially unaltered by 200 years of Spanish colonization and another century of Anglo dominance. Studies in this genre tend to disregard the extent to which at any given point in the history of a people, their culture is the product of historical interaction with other peoples; that the very concept of culture is fraught with instability; that the notion of an ethnic or cultural purity among so-called primitive peoples constitutes part of the modern colonial fantasy.

The radial symmetry of Ortiz' Tewa world provides a perfect model for the spatial configuration of such a fantasy. And yet one might ask certain questions concerning this model. To what extent does the location of the Roman Catholic church, present in every pueblo village, constitute already a displacement of the pre-Christian sacred center, the "center of centers"? What does one make of the fact that the entrance to the church itself has sometimes been a site of contestation between Indians and Anglo tourists, who are predictably Protestant? Lawrence relates an incident at Taos in which two Indians guard the door during a mass at San Geronimo Church, turning away Anglos on the grounds that they are not Catholics (102). In this incident the church has at least momentarily replaced the kiva as the sacred center and the site of exclusion which authenticates Tewa identity. Would there not exist, then, a certain tension between the kiva and the church as centers of spiritual and cultural identity? And would this tension not serve to destabilize the perfect symmetry surrounding the "center of centers" ascribed to the Tewa world by the modernist literary and anthropological imaginations? Rather than being fixed in eternal symmetry, pueblo culture would appear to be like other human cultures, bound up in a continuing process of decentering and recentering – the "center" of tribal life now

suspended between pre-Christian and Catholic sites, now displaced once more by the blandishments of capitalism in the form of casinos, condominium developments and tourist resorts on reservation lands. This is not to register the absolute loss of a once pure pueblo culture, but to see it as something that has been always already in process.

Jean Baudrillard points out that in a world which perfectly reflects a divine or natural order, "the question of authenticity does not arise," because such a world would not be tainted by the fake, the degraded imitation, or the inauthentic, things against which claims for authenticity acquire their meaning (*Critique* 103). The authentic, in other words, can only be spoken from a position of estrangement and longing. While *The Tewa World* retains its value as a meaningful presentation of the traditional Tewa world view, it belongs, like most classic anthropological studies of the American Indian, to what James Clifford has called ethnographic allegory, meaning that

realistic portraits, to the extent that they are "convincing" or "rich," are extended metaphors, patterns of associations that point to coherent (theoretical, esthetic, moral) additional meanings. Allegory . . . calls to mind the poetic, traditional, cosmological nature of such processes. (100)

In its elegant portrait of the Tewa world, Ortiz's work carries implicit aesthetic and moral values of timeless ritual, spatial nodality, and depth of experience. Such values are made explicit in writers like Lawrence, while in mass culture they have been commodified, turned into popular icons and used to direct the movements of tourists.

## II

On a recent visit to Taos Pueblo, I entered the home of a woman who was selling bread baked in one of the traditional adobe "beehive" ovens which stand in the village plaza. As if giving evidence of the bread's culinary authenticity, she pointed with pride to a picture postcard on the wall behind her. The image on the postcard showed this woman baking bread in the oven outside her door. I then remembered having seen this same photograph on the cover of the 1995 *Visitors' Guide* to the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos, a glossy magazine-style publication of the New Mexico Department of Tourism and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc.

The banality of this incident has not prevented me from reflecting on what it represents in terms of the production of space and the construction of

authenticity in the context of tourism. The most curious feature of the incident – the doubling and tripling of the scene by means of the postcard and the tourism brochure – belongs to the postmodern phase of tourism. Modernist tourism, as I have characterized it above, is based on the fundamental opposition between modernity and a more authentic realm of tradition, a system of polarity played out in spatial terms of depth and surface, center and periphery, inside and outside, forbidden and accessible, territory and map: in each case the latter term constituting a kind of supplement of debased ontological value. In Baudrillard's model of the postmodern, however, these essentially binary distinctions are superseded by a *precession of simulacra*, a profusion of media images whose value is generated not by their representation of the real, but by their differential relation to other images. Linguistically speaking, their value is syntactical rather than referential. Such images or simulacra precede one's experience of any given space or event, and thus come to dominate its meaning. In Baudrillard's words, "the territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory . . . it is the map that engenders the territory" (*Simulacra* 166). This is not to deny the existence of the real, but rather to acknowledge that our experience of the real and even our notion of what constitutes the real is always already mediated through an "empire of signs," to borrow Roland Barthes' provocative phrase; it is to acknowledge, furthermore, that this world of signs is part of our reality if not indeed the dominant portion, and that it is subject to radical and bewildering historical transformations.

What then constitutes the space in which the woman of Taos bakes bread? Is it Taos Pueblo, honored place of her ancestors, or is it rather "Taos Pueblo," a space defined not by the adobe walls of the village, but by the unlimited range of dissemination marked by the postcard and the tourism brochure: the vast empire of the post and the advertising image. So much would appear to be suggested by the incident of the Taos woman's postcard: in the postmodern economy of the sign, her baking bread has become not so much authentic in itself as a sign of authenticity, its signifying function confirmed by its reproducibility in the form of the postcard. In recalling this postcard, one can hardly ignore that other postcard made famous in poststructuralist theory. Just as the Taos postcard subverts the conventional primacy of the event over its image, so Derrida's postcard – a thirteenth century image of Plato directing Socrates to write – subverts the traditional hierarchy of the master over the student, and of oral testimony over its written record (9). Where Derrida exploits every possible play on the word



“post,” I shall confine myself to observing that the empire of the post covers not just the global span of the postal system, but also the wide-ranging effects of a postmodern order whose most striking characteristic is the proliferation and power of the image.

The postmodern era of tourism, then, puts inverted commas around “authenticity” while it collapses traditionally hierarchical distinctions of center and periphery, inside and outside, surface and depth. Here everything is surface – map and terrain, postcard and landscape. There is blithe confusion between the simulation of a space or event and its putative object: is the woman dressed in native costume simply baking bread, or is she “performing” this ritual as a kind of ethnic simulation? In any case, tourists often prefer the less ambiguous simulations of Disney World and the open-air folk museum to the dangers and inconveniences of the “authentic” primitive village. The postmodern tourist is like the artist in Henry James’ story “The Real Thing,” who confesses to “an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I liked things that appeared; then one was sure. Whether they *were* or not was a subordinate and almost always a profitless question” (188-9). The primacy of the simulacrum has vertiginous consequences for the production of space. Dean MacCannell has remarked on the increasing difficulty of distinguishing between the front and back regions of touristic space. The latter are those behind-the-scenes places where one might hope to encounter the real: the sewers of Paris, the actual living quarters of a noble family in the back rooms of a stately home whose grander spaces are open to the public. However, the dynamics of touristic space are such that the front-back distinction is rapidly eroding into a continuum that MacCannell compares to “an infinite regression of stage sets” (*Tourist* 105).

In New Mexico, the collapse of inside and outside is represented by the mutual appropriation of spatial and architectural models by the pueblo and Anglo communities, respectively. Every visitor to Santa Fe is struck by its architectural style. “Santa Fe style” is predominantly a mixture of Pueblo Indian and Spanish colonial. But in what has come to be considered its purest form, it is a direct imitation of the pueblo architecture of the upper Rio Grande region: low walls, adobe or plaster exteriors, ladders rather than stairs, flat roofs, planar surfaces, rectilinear dimensions with soft edges, a few, rectangular openings, and multi-tiered setbacks. (Sheppard 76). This traditional form is sometimes called Pueblo Revival, a style inaugurated in 1915 by Isaac Hamilton Rapp with his design of the Museum of New

Mexico, based on the San Esteban Rey mission at Acoma Pueblo. Conceived as a means of creating Santa Fe into "the tourist center of the Southwest" (Sheppard 75), this style was to become officially sanctioned and was gradually to impose uniformity on the architecture of the city. It is the style of several tourist hotels, notably Rapp's La Fonda (1920) and more recently La Posada de Santa Fe, which advertises a "serene and secluded setting surrounded by adobe cottages and lovely gardens" representing "the magic and romance of Santa Fe" (*New Mexico Vacation Guide* 143). In a concrete realization of the colonial fantasy, the architecture of natural serenity and seclusion traditionally belonging to the Indian pueblo is displaced and reappropriated by the tourist industry.

The fantasy of a return to a premodern past implicit in the Pueblo Revival, however, has recently given way to what some architectural historians call "Southwest Postmodern." As represented in the works of designers like James Jereb, Southwest postmodernism freely combines the traditional forms of Santa Fe style with elements from Mayan temples, Moroccan fortresses, and an eclectic mix of other historical and geographical sources. The architectural transition from Pueblo Revival to Southwest Postmodern is emblematic of a larger movement in the cultural production of touristic space. On one hand, Pueblo Revival embodies the modernist notions of a return to an origin and a center; its aesthetic coherence depends on the idealization of a specific place. On the other hand, like more familiar forms of postmodern architecture, Southwest postmodernism dismantles this geographically and historically centered aesthetic in favor of the purely formal play of signs whose cultural origins become less and less traceable.

Revivalist or postmodern, the architecture of Santa Fe is in any case a candid simulation. Although the style associated with adobe dwellings has been mandated by local ordinance since 1957, the actual materials are not. Santa Fe residents will tell you that real adobe is dusty, it crumbles, and requires continual maintenance. Modern Santa Fe houses are built instead with a kind of stucco: cement is sprayed over a wire mesh exterior, then painted to look like adobe. In this as in other things, the simulation is generally preferred to the real thing.

On the reservations, the counterpart to this appropriation of indigenous architectural models is the construction of art galleries, casinos, and resort hotels on Indian lands. At Santa Clara Pueblo, one enters an actual adobe building to find oneself in the spare, hard-edged surroundings of a Manhattan-style gallery space, where the dealer offers a "certificate of



authenticity” to go with the purchase of the local pottery on display. On the Mescalero Apache reservation, a sacred mountain is the site of a resort hotel, the Inn of the Mountain Gods, where tourists are invited to “Come, Live the Legend.” And San Juan Pueblo, the ancient site of Ortiz’ Tewa world, recently opened the Ohkay gambling casino, a 22,000 square-foot facility in a newly-landscaped campus-like setting. The semiotics of this space offer a concrete instance of the logic of the simulacrum, of an infinite regression of stage sets. The casino’s exterior has the squared-off setbacks and adobe coloring reminiscent of traditional pueblo architecture, combined with the long horizontal porticos of the Spanish colonial style. Inside, however, the style is pure Las Vegas, all flashing lights, bright chrome and soft carpeting, with no clocks or windows to remind gamblers of the passing of time. Thus the Pueblo’s simulacrum of itself gives way to the simulacrum of Las Vegas, a city itself founded on the principle of the simulacrum, with its mock references to ancient Rome, the Sahara, etc. One is so quickly caught up in the dizzying play of spatial and architectural signifiers that the traditional distinction between modernity and the “Tewa world” seems but another term in the series.

The interpenetration of styles and spaces that I describe here constitutes the scene of a capitalist ideal shared by tourists and Indians alike, an ideal defined by MacCannell as “the Utopian vision of profit without exploitation” (*Empty* 28). The point has been made more systematically by Fredric Jameson, for whom the so-called postmodern sublime is but the symbolic counterpart, in the realm of cultural production, to the penetration and colonization of various precapitalist enclaves of culture and consciousness by the new expansion of multinational capital (49). The vision of profit without exploitation of course neglects the fact that when someone gets rich others must pay, whether they are the working-class New Mexicans of all races who lose at the casinos, or the Spanish-speaking residents of Santa Fe who are forced from their homes by rising property values. Such scenes bring us at last to the intersection of the postmodern and the postcolonial, that is, where a new order of cultural production has consequences for the relations of power existing between peoples defined by cultural and racial difference.

Recognizing that postmodern culture is the site of a power struggle which still puts his people at a disadvantage, the Native American writer Gerald Vizenor proposes a new kind of Indian warfare, one adapted to the image-oriented environment defined by Baudrillard. For Vizenor, the colonialist doctrine of Manifest Destiny has given way to a postmodern and postcolonial order of “manifest manners,” the “simulations” of dominance constructed in

representations of the American Indian in the media. Such representations include the idealization of Indian life by the dominant culture, a process in which opportunistic Indians themselves participate. To resist this new form of colonization, Vizenor celebrates the "postindian warriors of simulations; that sensation of a new tribal presence in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians." On a cultural battlefield controlled by representation and invention, the weapons of the postindian warriors are counter-representation and new invention: humor, new stories, and other "simulations of survivance" whose purpose is a liberating "recreation of the real" (3-5):

the postindian warriors of postmodern simulations would undermine and surmount, with imagination and the performance of new stories, the manifest manners of scriptural simulations and "authentic" representations of the tribes in the literature of dominance. (17)

We might note in passing what happens to the concept of space in Vizenor's discourse. The territorial expansion of Manifest Destiny having reached its natural boundaries, the terrain of colonization has shifted to the nongeographical space of the signifier, whose topography is that of consciousness itself. This deterritorialization applies to the space of tourism as well, where the advantages of actually traveling to sites of traditional interest may be diminishing in favor of images and sounds conveyed by the new electronic media. The immediacy with which such images respond to the subject's desire and the ease with which they are manipulated make them that much more adaptable to the realm of fantasy, the inner space of tourism.

The affinity of postmodern modes of production with those of capitalist and colonial fantasy naturally raises the question whether such modes can serve a strategy of resistance, or whether resistance has to be staged from positions outside the entire system, what Jameson calls "extraterritorial and Archimedean footholds" of critical efficacy (49). Essentially this question has been raised with specific reference to Vizenor by Hartwig Isernhagen, who notes in Vizenor's writing an ambivalence between the celebration of the postmodern play of signifiers and the recognition that language must refer to real conditions of existence. Isernhagen finds that Vizenor negotiates a "shaky middle ground" between these two alternatives, a terrain that is for all its instability "the only tenable position" (122-23).

The figure of a shaky middle ground serves as well to describe the nature of touristic space in the postmodern era, a space neither inside nor outside, where reference to a stable reality is continually undermined by the reproduction and commodification of images that take the place of the real.

This unstable terrain is also occupied by contemporary Pueblo Indians, many of whom share the postmodern sense of irony concerning their own position as objects of touristic interest.

Stories of real-life postindian warriors are to be found in the work of contemporary anthropologists such as Jill Sweet and Deirdre Evans-Pritchard. Evans-Pritchard records a subtle and devastating trick played by Navajos at the Kayenta trading post on their reservation. When a carful of tourists would arrive, seeking directions or asking to take pictures of the men, they would be met with stony silence and sullen attitudes. Once the tourists departed, the Indians would burst into laughter (98).

These Indians appear to be waging a "war of simulation," using humor and representation in order to regain a portion of ground lost to the forces of commodification whose advance guard are the legions of tourism. This war involves a complex strategy of counter-representation, in which the Hollywood image of the sullen Indian – menacing through his very silence and motionlessness – is appropriated ironically by Indians themselves and turned against the dominant culture responsible for generating this image. The performance is replete with a dramatic irony which plays on the tourist's faith in the stereotype, appearing to confirm it while showing it to be merely a pose for those in on the joke.

In terms of the dynamics of postmodern representation, however, it is difficult to imagine an instance more evocative of the "shaky middle ground" than this taciturn performance. On one hand, the Navajos at the trading post are engaged in the pure play of signifiers: the performance of silence and motionlessness – literally a performance of nothing, a gesture constituted by the absence of gesture – signifying, if anything at all, another performance (what I have called the Hollywood image), itself a signifier, and so on through the regression of stage sets. On the other hand, this silent performance has a certain effect in the contestation of space represented by the reservation itself, the trading post, and the intrusion of tourism. For a moment at once disturbing and humorous, the inhabitants of the reservation are at their most reserved, the trading post is the site of a non-exchange, and bewildered tourists are sent on their way without directions. The Navajos have reasserted something like authority over their territory by doing precisely nothing; they have regained ground in a way that nonetheless acknowledges its own theatricality. The enigmatic nature of this contestation suggests new meanings for the notion of an Indian Detour. Once the commercial name for a leisurely exploration of territory in the geographical sense, the Indian Detour might now be understood as the postmodern trope

of the Indian trickster, the detour of representation that opens onto unknown territory in the postcolonial relations between peoples.

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